

Pilot Mountain



Like the rocky escarpments in nearby Hanging Rock State Park, Pilot Mountain is a remnant of the ancient Sauratown Mountains. A quartzite monadnock, this rugged mountain rock has survived for millions of years while the elements have eroded surrounding peaks to a rolling plain.

Pilot Mountain is capped by two prominent pinnacles. Big Pinnacle, with walls of bare rock and a rounded top covered by vegetation, rises 1,400 feet above the valley floor, the knob jutting skyward more than 200 feet from its base. Big Pinnacle is connected to Little Pinnacle by a narrow saddle. Visitors have easy access to the top of Little Pinnacle where the expansive view encompasses hundreds of square miles of the Piedmont and the nearby mountains of North Carolina and Virginia.

History Highlights

To the native Saura Indians, the earliest known inhabitants of the region, Pilot Mountain was known as Jomeokee, the “Great Guide” or “Pilot.” It guided both American Indians and early European hunters along a north-south path through the area. The Sauras were driven southward by the Cherokees, who subsequently occupied the area. Further settlement in the area was led by Moravians but the population remained sparse during colonial times due to frontier turbulence created by an alliance between the Cherokee Indians and the British.

The mountain was mapped in 1751 by Joshua Fry and Peter Jefferson, father of President Thomas Jefferson. Pilot Mountain became North Carolina’s 14th state park in 1968, due in large part to the efforts of a group of local citizens. Prior to that time, the mountain was a commercial tourist attraction. The Pilot Mountain Preservation and Park Committee proposed the establishment of Pilot Mountain as a state park in order to protect it and the surrounding area from further commercial development. The group secured options on the land and raised matching funds that made it possible to purchase the land with federal grants. In further support of the park, the committee acquired more than 1,000 acres of land along the Yadkin River that was added to the park in 1970. Additional acreage was later acquired, bringing the park to its present size of 3,651 acres. Today, Pilot Mountain stands as a monument to the desire and concern of a citizenry dedicated to preserving the natural resources of North Carolina.

Flora & Fauna

The vegetation in the park is similar to that found in mountain habitats such as those in the Blue Ridge Mountains. More than 70 families of vascular plants grow on and around Pilot Mountain. In late spring, the Big Pinnacle is ringed with the bright pink blooms of Catawba rhododendron. Also abundant is mountain laurel, distinguished by its leathery evergreen leaves and showy clusters of white flowers. Typical trees include the chestnut oak, table mountain pine and pitch pine. Wild blueberry, huckleberry and grape can be spotted along the trails. The park protects plant species that are rare in N.C., such as bear oak and Greenland sandwort.



Listen as American toads, chorus frogs and spring peepers call from nearby pools. Numerous songbirds including the eastern bluebird, Carolina wren, brown thrasher and various warblers supply the woods with music. Watch for ravens soaring above Big Pinnacle. The raven is a rare bird at Pilot Mountain. Other wildlife in the park includes red and gray fox, white-tailed deer, coyote, black bear, woodchuck, opossum, gray squirrel, raccoon and several species of reptiles and amphibians. The park protects several species of amphibians that are rare in the northwest piedmont.

Rock Climbing

Rock climbing and rappelling are favorite activities at Pilot Mountain where rocky cliffs offer a challenge to experienced climbers. Climbing is permitted only in designated areas. Climbing and rappelling are not permitted on the Big Pinnacle. All climbers must register before beginning a climb. Contact the park office for further information.

Trails



Journey on foot, on horseback or in a canoe. No matter what your mode of travel, Pilot Mountain has miles of trails to explore. Little Pinnacle Overlook offers hikers a close-up view of Big Pinnacle and distant views of the valley below. Equestrians and hikers alike will relish the trails through the five-mile woodland corridor that connects the two sections of the park. Cliffs and crevices, ravens and rhododendron are only a small part of the scenery to be discovered. See the park map for more information about the trails.

Nature's Classroom

Rangers hold regularly scheduled educational and interpretive programs about Pilot Mountain State Park. Contact the park office to arrange a special exploration of Pilot Mountain State Park for your group or class.

Educational materials about Pilot Mountain State Park have been developed for grades 9-12 and are correlated to North Carolina’s competency-based curriculum in science, social studies, mathematics and English/language arts. The Pilot Mountain program introduces students to the “mountains away from the mountains” and the geologic processes that formed them. Accompanying the program is a teacher’s booklet and workshop, free of charge to educators.



On the River

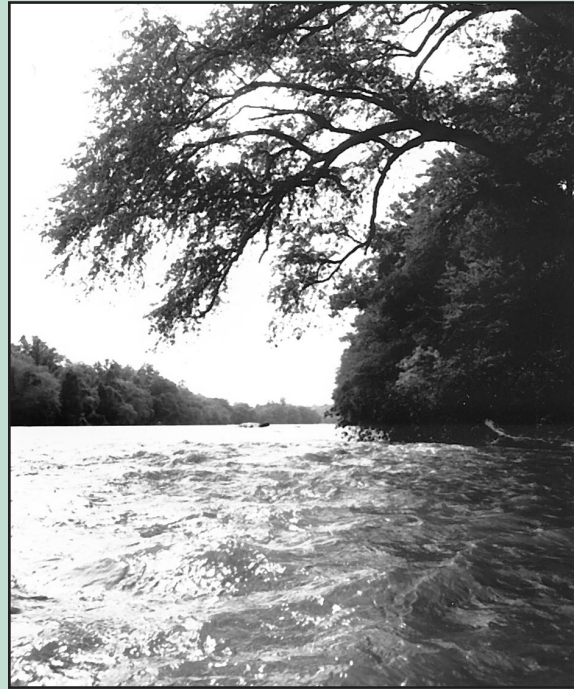
Canoeing: Enjoy the Yadkin River by canoeing through the park on a segment of the Yadkin River Canoe Trail. The 165-mile trail follows the course of the river passing through five reservoirs to the confluence of the Yadkin and Uwharrie rivers.

The two-mile portion of the Yadkin River that flows through the Pilot Mountain State Park is one of the most scenic stretches along the river’s course. Enormous river birches overhang the water and sycamores dot the river banks. Here, the river is broad and shallow with many ripples. Two small islands, 45 and 15 acres in size, lie in the river. The islands may be reached by wading on foot, by horseback or by canoe.

The river flows past Bean Shoals Canal Wall, part of an ambitious project undertaken between 1820 and 1825 to build a three-mile canal around Bean Shoals. The project was abandoned before completion. View these historic walls along Canal Trail.

There are 38 canoe access sites along the trail. Shoals Access Site is a half mile upstream from the Yadkin Islands. Parts of the river are also suitable for rafting at times. Contact the park office for more information.

Fishing: Cast your line from the river banks and reel in dinner. Sunfish, crappie and catfish are waiting to be caught. Anglers need a state fishing license and must obey the regulations of the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission.



Camping

Family camping: The lower slopes of Pilot Mountain house the family camping area where 49 campsites for tents and trailers are scattered among oaks and hickories. Each site has a tent pad, table and grill. Drinking water is available throughout the campground and two modern washhouses with hot showers are conveniently located nearby. Hookups are not provided. Bring your own firewood. Gathering wood in the park is prohibited. Sites are open March 15 through November 30 and are available by reservation.

Canoe camping: A canoe campsite is available on the north side of the Yadkin River by reservation only. Water and toilet facilities are not provided and a strict “leave no trace” ethic must be followed. Camping is not allowed on the Yadkin River islands.

Youth tent camping: On the north side of the Yadkin River, a camping area for youth groups includes tables, a fire circle, drinking water and pit toilets. Here, organized youth groups can enjoy fellowship in a wilderness setting. Reservations are required. Campers should be alert to high water conditions which may cause flooding in the area.

Reservations

A full-service, online- and call center-based reservations system is now available and can be used to reserve campsites, picnic shelters and other park facilities. Visit www.ncparks.gov or call 1-877-7-CAMP-NC to make reservations.

Picnicking

Three picnic areas at Pilot Mountain offer a choice of shady dining spots. The picnic area in the Pilot Mountain section is located near the summit parking lot. Picnic tables and grills are surrounded by a pine and hardwood forest. Drinking water and restrooms are located nearby.



Two picnic grounds in the Yadkin River section of the park are approximately a half mile from the shore of the river. Picnic sites on the north shore of the river are located in an open grassy area along Horne Creek. Tables, grills, drinking water and pit toilets are provided. A similar facility is located on the south shore of the river.

The covered picnic shelter in the Pilot Mountain section is perfect for group outings. The shelter will accommodate up to 35 people. A nearby grill makes cooking simple. To be sure that the shelter is available, reservations are suggested. Use of the picnic shelter is free of charge unless reservations are requested.

Rules & Regulations

Make your visit a safe and rewarding experience. Some of our rules are posted in the park for the protection of our park and our visitors. A complete list of regulations is available at the park office.

- ☐ Damage to or removal of any plant, animal, rock or mineral is prohibited.
- ☐ All North Carolina state parks are wildlife preserves. Hunting or trapping is not permitted. Respect park wildlife. Do not feed or frighten the animals.
- ☐ Fishing is permitted only during park hours. Regulations of the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission are enforced.
- ☐ Do not litter. Help maintain a clean environment by placing trash in proper receptacles. State law requires aluminum cans to be placed in recycling containers.
- ☐ Cooking fires are permitted only in designated areas.
- ☐ Firearms and fireworks are not permitted.
- ☐ The possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages is prohibited.
- ☐ North Carolina motor vehicle and traffic laws apply in the park.
- ☐ Pets must be on a leash no longer than six feet.
- ☐ Camping is permitted in designated areas by permit only.
- ☐ As a courtesy to other campers, observe the posted campground quiet hours.
- ☐ Horses are permitted on bridle trails only.
- ☐ Rock climbing is permitted in designated areas only. All climbers must register before beginning a climb.

For Your Safety

To prevent accidents, please remember these safety tips.

- ☐ The Yadkin River and its tributaries are prone to flooding during heavy rains. Exercise caution when near the river.
- ☐ Be alert to venomous snakes, ticks and poison ivy along park trails.
- ☐ Be alert to approaching storms and seek appropriate shelter.
- ☐ When hiking, stay on designated trails and away from cliff faces.
- ☐ Remember that daylight hours are shorter in the fall and winter. Allow plenty of time for a hike to avoid being caught by darkness.
- ☐ Dress properly. Check with park employees regarding weather and terrain.
- ☐ The railroad tracks along the Yadkin River are a functioning part of the railway system. Be alert to oncoming trains and stay off the tracks.

Contact park staff for other safety tips or for an explanation of park rules.

Welcome!

Approach from any direction and see Pilot Mountain rising more than 1,400 feet above the rolling countryside of the upper Piedmont plateau. Dedicated as a National Natural Landmark in 1976, this solitary peak is the centerpiece of Pilot Mountain State Park.

Fun, from relaxation to exhilaration, is easy to find here. Treat yourself to a horseback ride through the woods or challenge the river from raft or canoe. A five-mile woodland corridor joins two sections of the park, each section offering a wealth of opportunities for outdoor fun. The mountain segment, which includes the two pinnacles, contains most of the visitor facilities. The more primitive river section centers around the lazy, meandering Yadkin River.



Information

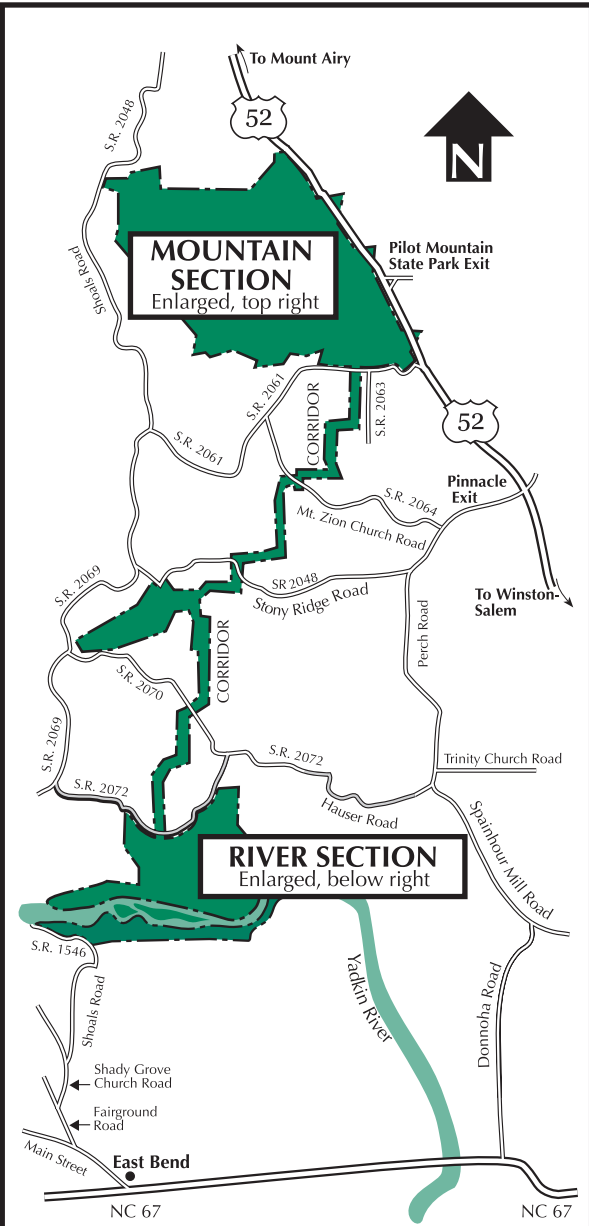
To learn more about Pilot Mountain State Park, contact:

Pilot Mountain State Park
1792 Pilot Knob Park Road
Pinnacle, NC 27043
(336) 325-2355
pilot.mountain@ncmail.net
www.ncparks.gov

Discover other North Carolina state parks and recreation areas, contact:

N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation
Dept. of Environment and Natural Resources
1615 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1615
(919) 733-4181

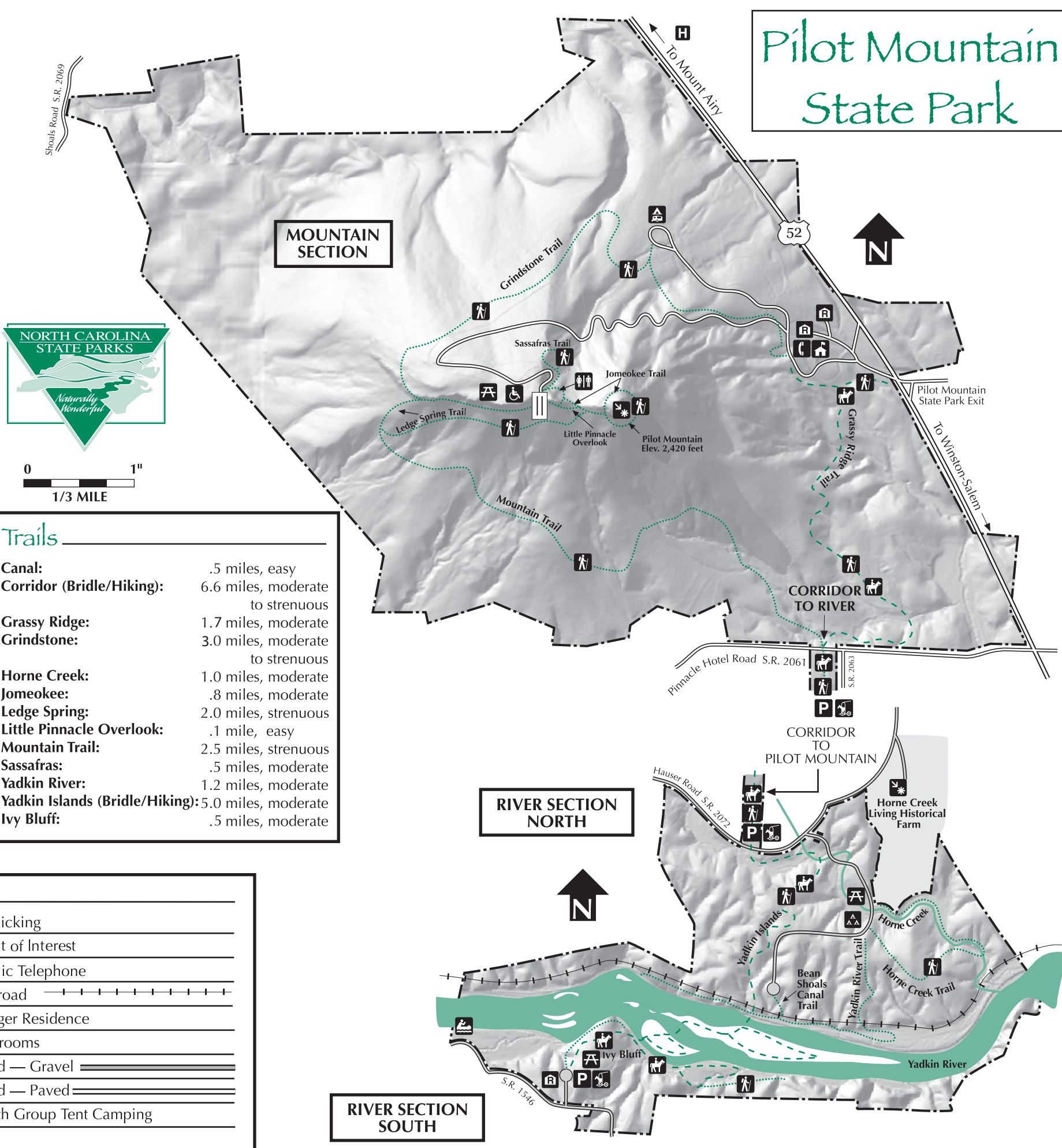
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FROM THE MOUNTAIN SECTION

- **To River Section North (Surry County) — 10 miles**
From US 52, take the Pinnacle exit and follow the signs to Horne Creek Farm. The park entrance is approximately .4 miles past Horne Creek Farm.
- **To River Section South (Yadkin County) — 20 miles**
Take NC 67 to the town of East Bend. From Main St., turn right on Fairground Rd. Turn right on Shady Grove Church Rd. Turn right on Shoals Rd. and follow it to the park.

Legend			
	Accessible		Picnicking
	Bridle Trail		Point of Interest
	Canoe Launch		Public Telephone
	Family Camping		Railroad
	Hiking Trail		Ranger Residence
	Horse Trailer Parking		Restrooms
	Hospital-Northern Surry (336) 789-9541		Road — Gravel
	Parking		Road — Paved
	Park Boundary		Youth Group Tent Camping
	Park Office		

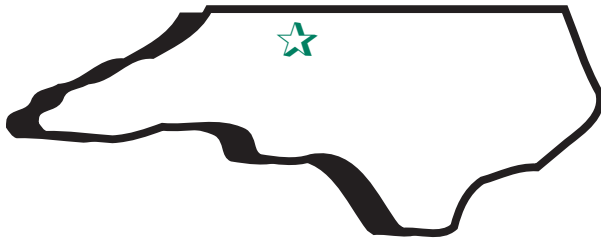


N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation
Department of Environment and Natural Resources



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Pilot Mountain State Park is located in Surry and Yadkin counties, 24 miles north of Winston-Salem and 14 miles south of Mount Airy.

Park Hours

November - February 8 a.m. – 6 p.m.
March, April, September & October 8 a.m. – 8 p.m.
May - August 8 a.m. – 9 p.m.
Closed Christmas Day
*River Section: Contact park office for seasonal hours.